Sociology 239A/B -- INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH ON SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Syllabus - Winter and Spring 2006

TIME AND PLACE: Tuesday 2:00 - 4:50. Winter: Haines A78; Spring: TBA.

CLASS WEBSITE: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/soc239a-1/

PREREQUISITE: Soc. 210A and 210B or the equivalent.

INSTRUCTORS:
   Robert Mare, 208 Haines, 825-5585, mare@ucla.edu
   Donald J. Treiman, 214 Haines, 825-1610, treiman@ucla.edu

OFFICE HOURS: By appointment.

SUBJECT MATTER: This two-quarter course is an introduction to the modern research literature on social stratification and social mobility in the U.S. and abroad, as represented in journal articles and research monographs. The course is a reading course, not a research seminar. It focuses on concepts, data, methods, and facts about: occupational and class structure; the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status; the effects of family, school, and labor market on socioeconomic achievement, careers, and inequality; earnings, income, and wealth distribution; poverty; subjective aspects of stratification, including socialization, the effects of work on personality, social distance, and class identification; social mobility; socioeconomic factors and marriage; and, and gender and ethnic stratification.

READINGS: Class readings will be provided via the web. No reader is available for purchase. Readings will be available from various electronic sources, listed below, including the course web page, http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/soc239a-1/. Students should arrange access to a high speed computer (the Social Science Computing Lab, 2035 Public Policy, is one possibility), in order to be able to download files efficiently since some of them, especially those on the course web page that were scanned as image files, are very large. We will add articles to the course web page as quickly as possible, but certainly no later than the date on which they are introduced (a week before we discuss them).

ASSIGNMENTS AND FORMAT: During the last half hour of each week's class one of the instructors will provide an overview of the topic and readings for the following week's class. Each week several leading articles or chapters dealing with a particular topic are read and discussed in class. Participation in the class discussion is an integral part of the work of the course. Students should come prepared to analyze the week’s readings with respect to both substance and method and must participate actively in the discussion.

Assigned readings fall into two groups: (1) “core” readings, which are to be read by all students, and (2) “précis” readings, each of which is to be read by one student who will prepare and
distribute a précis of the reading prior to each week’s class. The exact rate of assignments will depend upon the course enrolment.

A précis is a summary that contains the essential details about theory, method, and findings. It is not a critique. For a 20 page article, a 2-3 page, single-spaced summary usually suffices. Précis should be sent via email to the other students and to the instructors by 9:00 a.m. of the day prior to each class meeting—that is, by 9:00 a.m. Monday morning. The instructors will post the précis on the website. All members of the class are responsible for reading each précis and being prepared to raise and answer questions about each précis as well as the core readings.

Each week a team of 2 to 4 students will serve as discussion leaders. The responsibilities of the team include: (1) to write the précis for the week; (2) to prepare a brief oral introduction of the readings for the purposes of initiating the class discussion; and (3) to prepare a set of questions that will guide class discussion. For the most part it is NOT the responsibility of the team to lecture to the class. Rather, the team's responsibility is to keep the discussion going and to make sure that the key aspects of the readings are covered. Conversely, students who are not discussion leaders in a given week have the same responsibility as the leaders to read and be prepared to discuss the week's readings.

Students who successfully complete the course will be well prepared to take the Social Stratification field exam and are encouraged to do so immediately following the course. There will be a midterm exam (at the end of the first quarter) and a final exam (at the end of the second quarter), both in the format of the Field Exam (open-book, take-home exams to be completed over several days).

GRADING: The final course grade will be based on performance on the following:

- Take-home midterm exam 1/3
- Take-home final exam 1/3
- Homework and class participation 1/3

THE GRADE "INCOMPLETE" WILL NOT BE GIVEN.

BACKGROUND READING: Most readings assume some background in social stratification. Students who have not had an undergraduate course in the field should read a basic textbook at the beginning of the Winter quarter. Examples of these are:

A good collection of primary readings on stratification is:


One problem with this collection is that many articles are excerpted. Students are should seek out and read the complete articles on topics of interest.

**STATISTICS REFERENCES:** Some of the readings include applications of structural equation models, categorical data analysis, econometric methods, and stochastic processes. Students are expected to understand the applications well enough to assess their contributions to the study of social stratification. Where necessary, we will devote class time to methodological issues. Students, however, should also do whatever independent work is necessary for them to grasp these issues.

Some useful references are:


**SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

Readings are available at

the class website (W): [http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/soc239a-1/](http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/06W/soc239a-1/) (click on “List of Links”)

*American Journal of Sociology* (from 2000) (AJS):

[http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/AJS/journal/](http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/AJS/journal/)


1/10 - Introduction and Course Overview

1/17 - Dimensions of Stratification (Treiman)

**Everybody reads**


Hout, Michael, and Thomas A. DiPrete. (Forthcoming). “What We Have Learned: RC 28's Contributions to Knowledge about Social Stratification.” *RSSM*. (W)

**Précis** [There are no précis in this section. Instead, we list two articles that you ought to have encountered in previous courses. If not, read them this week as background.]


1/24 - Occupations, Classes, Prestige, and Socioeconomic Status (Treiman)

Everybody reads


Ch. 5 [pp. 103-128], “Explaining the World Wide Similarity in Prestige Hierarchies.” (W)


Précis


1/31 - Status Attainment I: Occupational Achievement (Treiman)

Everybody Reads


Précis


Solga, Heike. 2002. “‘Stigmatization by Negative Selection’: Explaining Less-Educated People’s Decreasing Employment Opportunities.” *ESR* 159-178. (ESR)


2/7- Status Attainment II: Elaborations and Extensions (Mare)

Everybody Reads


Précis


2/14 - Education I: Educational Attainment (Mare)

*Everybody Reads*


Précis


2/21 - Education II: Schooling Processes (Mare)

Everybody Reads


Précis


2/28 - Intragenerational Mobility (Mare)

Everybody Reads


Précis


3/7 - Firms, Markets, and Status Attainment (Treiman)

*Everybody Reads*


*Précis*


3/14 - Intergenerational Mobility I (Mare)

Everybody reads


Précis: None this week.

MID-TERM EXAMINATION DUE 4:30 P.M., MONDAY, 3/20.

3/21, 3/28 - Recess

4/4 - Intergenerational Mobility II (Mare)

Everybody Reads


Précis


4/11 - Earnings, Income, and Wealth I (Mare)

*Everybody Reads*


*Précis*

4/18 - Earnings, Income, and Wealth II - Poverty (Treiman)

Everybody Reads


Précis


4/25 - Lifestyles, Leisure, and Consumption (Treiman)

Everybody Reads


**Précis**


5/2 - Ethnicity, Gender, and Discrimination (Treiman)

*Everybody Reads*


**Précis**


5/9 - Spatial Aspects of Stratification [Treiman may be away]

*Everybody Reads*


*Précis*


5/16 - Marriage, Family, and Stratification I (Mare) - Treiman away

*Everybody Reads*


Précis


5/23 - Marriage, Family, and Stratification II (Mare)

Everybody reads

[Read previously for 1/31 - review for this week.]

Précis

Phillips, Meredith. 1999. “Sibship Size and Academic Achievement: What Do We Know and What Do We Still Need to Know?” *ASR* 64:188-192. (J)


5/30 - International Comparisons of Stratification and Mobility (Treiman)

*Everybody Reads*


Treiman, Donald J., Harry B. G. Ganzeboom, and Susanna Rijken. 1998. “Educational Expansion and Educational Achievement in Comparative Perspective.” Paper presented at the meeting of the Research Committee on Social Stratification and Social Mobility, Taipei, 7-9 January. CCPR-007-03 (C)


*Précis*


6/6 - Trends and Transformations in Stratification and Mobility (Treiman)

Everybody Reads

[See also the other chapters in the book, analyses of mobility trends in specific nations.]

Précis


FINAL EXAMINATION DUE 4:30 P.M., MONDAY, 6/12.